Nevada Natural Resources Plan

Summary Report
Public Workshops Comments on
Resource Issues and Natural Resource Planning

Introduction

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is preparing a comprehensive Natural Resources Plan (NRP) for the State of Nevada. The plan is to report on the status of natural resources, of resource planning by government agencies and of the major issues. Improving coordination among resource management agencies and other government and citizen stakeholders is an inherent element of the project. The plan also will provide guidance on priority resource issues and on strategic approaches to finding solutions that consider ecological, economic and social factors. Therefore, gathering public input about resource issues and resource planning and management is an essential element in the NRP process.

To better understand local views on resource issues and the work of state agencies, the state's Technical Working Group (TWG) conducted public workshops in nine Nevada communities.[1] In addition to workshops, presentations on the NRP process were given to each county's board of commissioners, and a number of other state agencies, federal agencies, and state advisory boards. Comments recorded during public workshops, in letters and e-mails, and during presentations have been combined into this summary report.

The workshops were held during May through July 2000. Workshops were held in rural, suburban and urban areas. Workshop attendees were asked to identify and share their viewpoints on natural resource issues, ideas for solving problems, and opportunities for state agency coordination. An open forum workshop format was used. State TWG members facilitated the workshops and recorded hundreds of comments from people representing many different interests.[2] This public input is being used to identify the work that needs to be done to improve state agency coordination and to address important concerns about the condition, use and management of Nevada's natural resources.

Organization of the Workshop Comments

The report is divided into two parts. In Part 1, comments about resource condition, use and management are grouped under broad issue themes. Part 2 consists of comments covering viewpoints about and expectations for state, local and federal agency planning, databases and education. Some comments are repeated under multiple themes when the subject of the comment interconnected with other themes. To the extent possible, wording recorded at the workshops has been retained.

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[1] The Technical Working Group includes representatives from each division in the DCNR, the Nevada Department of Agriculture, and the Division of Minerals.

[2] Attendees represented conservation districts, county public land use advisory committees, local planning departments and commissions, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Nevada Farm Bureau, Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Sierra Club, plus other organizations and concerned citizens.

Report Organization

Part 1. Natural Resource Issues

Part 2. Natural Resources Planning, Data and Education Issues

Part 1. Natural Resource Issues

Urban Open Space and Agricultural Resources

Ecology

- ✓ Urban issues include air pollution, water quality, water supply, open space, urban/wildland interface fire, and recreation resources. These may be rural issues too.
- ✓ Land use planning is allowing building in forested areas. Development near forests affects forest health and makes wildland fire fighting more difficult.
- ✓ Development is fragmenting landscapes throughout the state.
- ✓ Fit natural communities into urban open space. Avoid making artificial parks without natural benefits.
- ✓ Less than 8 inches of precipitation can only support so many people. Tie development to availability of water.
- ✓ Illegal dumping of garbage (e.g., construction, household, and yard waste; nuisance materials like glass) in the desert around urban areas is a serious, widespread problem.

Socioeconomics

- ✓ Urban sprawl is occurring. A large amount of land is being developed. More homes are being built in wildland areas. Stop massive growth.
- ✓ Urban communities need to assure rural areas are economically viable. As rural counties lose tax base, more subsidies are needed. Connect rural and urban issues.
- ✓ Local government wants to keep open space for a variety of reasons. Open space helps maintain a better quality of life in urban areas.
- ✓ Development in forested areas limits economic use of natural resources.
- ✓ People moving into urban areas do not understand the limitation of natural resources in Nevada.
- ✓ Encourage agriculture on public land. Emphasize use of natural resources to meet economic needs of rural communities.
- ✓ State policies value development over agriculture and mining.
- ✓ Some counties' plans address protection of archeological, geological, viewshed and other resources.
- ✓ Urban encroachment on natural areas is too abrupt. Viewsheds need to be protected.
- ✓ Light pollution and noise pollution is increasing to unacceptable levels in rural areas of growing communities.

Institutional

- ✓ Identify lands and resources that should be protected in developing areas.
- ✓ The state natural resources plan could lead to more state involvement in local planning. Is there a state role in urban land use planning?
- ✓ Cost and benefits of acquiring environmentally sensitive private land needs to be analyzed.
- ✓ Better land use planning is a major concern in urban counties.
- ✓ Urban land use planning is different from rural land use planning. Quality of life in rural communities is connected to resource use.
- ✓ Growing communities need more utility transmission access. Approval of utility corridor projects on public land is difficult to obtain with environmental and archeological resource concerns.
- ✓ State and federal agencies are spending money to preserve natural resources and land in Northern Nevada. More money should be spent to preserve desert resources in Southern Nevada.

- ✓ Government should do proactive land use and transportation planning with natural resource preservation and integrity in mind.
- ✓ Funding for retaining open space is a problem. Provide information about grant opportunities.
- ✓ Federal agencies are acquiring more environmentally sensitive private land. This will result in more public land. Monitor changes in the net public land total.

Biological Resources

Ecology

- Protect ecology of areas that are still mostly intact.
- Use the Natural Resources Conservation Service "ecological site index" to develop "threat maps."
- Manage forests and woodlands by ecological condition for a diversity of vegetative communities.
- Thinned closed canopy pinyon and juniper woodlands create a mosaic of other plants that provide food for livestock and wildlife.
- Take action on native fish recovery. Improve native fish habitat conditions.
- The Nevada Bird Conservation Plan by Lahontan Audubon Society is an information source for habitat conservation.
- Development in and near forests affects forest health.
- Development is encroaching into and fragmenting wildlife habitat. Mining and fences also are fragmenting wildlife habitat.
- Fit natural communities into urban open space. Avoid creating only artificial parks.
- Big game introduction or reintroduction should only be supported after careful consideration of species, unallocated forage available, population management, impacts on licensed livestock operators and private land owners, approval of affected parties and after completion of a management plan.
- Since predators are missing from the ecosystem, humans must manage wild horses, wildlife and livestock.
- Evaluate studies that indicate climate change may have impacts on biological resources and ecosystems.

Socioeconomics

- Acquisition of water rights for minimum pools and instream flow for fishes, recreation or water quality should have been done years ago, when price was lower.
- Willing sellers of private land and water rights actually are being manipulated or forced by federal agency actions intended to protect species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Transportation impacts wildlife habitats and corridors.
- Mine closure activities have been blocked by measures to maintain bat habitat. Safety of humans is a higher priority than safety of animal species.
- Protection of animal species can have negative tradeoffs. For example, numbers of predators being seen close in to communities are increasing.
- Local land or resource plan objectives should be reasonable. For example, an objective to retain water resources for future needs should not wipe out threatened or endangered species.
- Rural government should have more say than urban government regarding endangered species in rural areas.
- Some people are opposed to management of wildlife and want nature to take its course. When setting goals or objectives for wildlife, make a distinction between management and conservation.

Institutional

- Help facilitate, coordinate, and implement habitat conservation plans and conduct monitoring where sensitive species exist in areas to be developed.
- Work together with local and federal agencies and organizations to avoid listing of species under the Endangered Species Act.

- More agencies need to work on a Sagebrush Conservation Plan to avoid listing of sage grouse and other species under the Endangered Species Act.
- More information about endemic species and habitats is needed.
- Goals to manage the sagebrush ecosystem for sage grouse should include other wildlife. Work towards ecological health of sagebrush lands.
- Determine appropriate numbers of wild horses, livestock and wildlife considering carrying capacity and ecological conditions.
- Agencies responsible for control of invasive/exotic plants and animals should not wait for Endangered Species Act listing to take action.
- Restricted and limited OHV use areas are being identified in the Clark County Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan. Only restrict OHV use for good reasons – necessary protective measures.
- More agencies need to work with the Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group and Nevada Division of Wildlife and similar groups to develop conservation plans for sage grouse and other wildlife.
- Endangered Species Act policies and actions concerning the control of Salt cedar, an invasive plant, and protecting habitat Southwestern Willow flycatcher are confusing.

Rangeland Resources

Ecology

- ✓ Rangeland health is multi-faceted, involving cows, cheat grass, fires, weeds, watersheds, wild horses and more.
- ✓ Protect the ecology of rangeland areas that are substantially intact.
- ✓ Use the Natural Resources Conservation Service "ecological site index" to develop "threat maps."
- ✓ Goals to manage the sagebrush ecosystem for sage grouse need to include other wildlife. Work towards ecological health of sagebrush lands.
- ✓ Revegetation trials are needed to find best seeding treatments.
- ✓ Allow controlled/prescribed burning to manage vegetation.
- ✓ Fire frequency in woody land cover types (e.g., pinyon/juniper woodlands, shrublands) is too low in some areas. Thinned pinyon and juniper woodlands create a mosaic of other plants.
- ✓ Woodland canopy closure eliminates understory plants that provide food for livestock and wildlife.
- ✓ Rangeland restoration options include green stripping and livestock grazing.
- ✓ Wild horse appropriate management levels (AMLs) need to be met to avoid resource damage and maintain rangeland health.

Socioeconomics

- ✓ Manage public rangeland for economic and realistic livestock grazing. More investment in rangeland resource management is needed instead of preservation actions.
- ✓ Ranchers want to see AMLs on herd management areas met, not removal of all wild horses.
- ✓ Encourage agriculture on public rangeland. Emphasize use of natural resources to meet economic needs of rural communities.
- ✓ Ranching is a romantic lifestyle, economically marginal at best. Nevada grazing provides a small percent of beef consumed in the US.
- ✓ The wild horse adoption program creates competition with private horse sales.
- ✓ A concern with state control of wild horse management is that an increase in the number of wild horse shootings will occur.
- ✓ Wild horses and cattle can coexist on the rangeland without management.
- ✓ There is a lot of misinformation about public land grazing. The state Rangeland Commission is working to provide information to the public.

Institutional

- ✓ Be involved with the Bureau of Land Management's Great Basin Restoration Initiative to take action on noxious weeds, watershed health and water quality improvement.
- ✓ Determine livestock adjustments using data on long term monitoring and ecological conditions.
- ✓ Determine appropriate numbers of wild horses, livestock and wildlife considering carrying capacity and ecological conditions.
- ✓ Support for the Nevada Division of Forestry seed bank is important. More seed is needed for revegetation following fires and floods. Seed shortages are prevalent.
- ✓ More agencies are needed to work on a Sagebrush Conservation Plan to avoid listing of sage grouse and other species under the Endangered Species Act.
- ✓ Big game introduction or reintroduction should only be supported after careful consideration of species, unallocated forage available, population management, impacts on licensed livestock operators and private land owners, approval of affected parties and after completion of a management plan.
- ✓ Funds for good, demonstrated management options and for rehabilitation and restoration are needed.

- ✓ Better rangeland management and condition documentation is needed from the Bureau of Land Management.
- ✓ Apply Bureau of Land Management Standards and Guidelines for rangeland health to manage wild horses as well as other resource uses.
- ✓ Coordinate with federal and local government to develop improvement standards for rangeland ecosystems considering multiple uses.
- ✓ Delays in the wild horse adoption program are holding up wild horse gathers.
- ✓ Be more involved in wild horse management. The state Department of Agriculture is developing a state wild horse management plan.
- ✓ More education is needed about the deteriorating health of rangeland resources.

Watershed Resources

Ecology

- Development in floodplains along lakes and rivers is a problem.
- Riparian and spring areas need protection and restoration.
- Wetlands are important to maintain for water filtration and infiltration.
- Improve water quality. Consider all nonpoint sources of pollution, including agriculture, transportation, lawn fertilizers, mines, air pollutant deposition and natural sources.
- Protect Walker Lake and other lakes. Protect wildlife and water quality in addition to water supplies.
- Take action on native fish recovery and improve native fish habitat conditions.
- Water allocation of rivers exceeds the quantity available. Better distribution of water is needed. Most is used for agriculture. Water laws should be revised.
- Depletion of groundwater is occurring faster than the recharge rate. Ground water levels in wells are dropping.

Socioeconomics

- Watershed planning connects land use planning and natural resources planning.
- The TMDL rule will mandate use of best management practices and add to costs.
- Use incentives, not penalties, to solve water resource problems. Some willing sellers of water rights are being manipulated or coerced by government actions.
- Acquisition of water for minimum pools and instream flow to support fishes, recreation and water quality should have been done years ago when price was lower.
- Local water resource plans should help protect water resources and rights to secure potential for economic development.
- Transportation land use impacts floodplains and stormwater drainage.
- Water conservation is important. Public agencies set a bad example when water efficient landscaping with native plants is not used.
- Encourage desert landscaping. Native plant supplies are inadequate.
- The Bureau of Land Management proposal to acquire water rights for Walker Lake is inconsistent with Enlibra principles. Local involvement was inadequate.
- More education on wetland benefits is needed.

Institutional

- State agencies should help maintain and restore privately and publicly held riparian land.
- US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water Act total maximum daily load (TMDL) rule is an emerging issue for federal public land managers.
- Facilitate coordination between counties and federal agencies to implement the TMDL rule.
- State government should develop water use policy that ensures both water quantity and quality.
- More community assistance should be provided by state agencies for "on the ground" watershed improvements.
- Support local level watershed planning. State agencies' roles in watershed planning should be funding and technical assistance.
- Use "wetland banks" for compliance with wetland protection regulations.
- Protection of watersheds for water supply may be better on some military properties compared to Bureau of Land Management properties. Land use activities are more limited on military land.
- EPA should evaluate water quality impacts from large numbers of wild horses.
- The state plan should consider scientific information about climate change effects on water use. Studies of climate change effects indicate summer temperatures and rainfall my increase in Nevada. Also address flood control.

Forest and Woodland Resources

Ecology

- Development in and near forests affects forest health.
- Manage forests and woodlands by ecological condition for a diversity of vegetative communities.
- Thinned pinyon and juniper woodlands create a mosaic of other plants. Woodland closure eliminates understory plants that provide food for livestock and wildlife.
- Support use of environmentally sensitive harvesting technologies.
- Fire frequency in woody land cover types (e.g., pinyon/juniper woodlands, shrublands) is too low in some areas. Allow controlled/prescribed burning to manage vegetation.
- Controlled/prescribed burning can cause cheat grass and red brome to invade.

Socioeconomics

- Tree harvesting is less likely to be allowed with homes near or in the forest. The cost to mitigate public concerns gets too high.
- Economic use of natural resources is more difficult with development in and adjacent to wildlands.
- Economic use of pinyon and juniper woodlands ties into fire pre-suppression activities. Biomass energy production is an economic use of pinyon and juniper.
- Wildland fire fighting is more difficult with development in and adjacent to wildlands. Controlled/prescribed burning is a liability for federal public land managers.
- Promote multiple use of forests and woodlands.

Institutional

- Land use planning is allowing building in trees.
- More research is needed on the use of fire as a resource management tool in forests and woodlands.
- Require defensible space around developments and homes in forested areas. Reduce dependency on suppression by fire agencies and increase prevention activities.
- Emphasize harvesting for environmental improvement.
- Educate people about productive forest uses.

Recreation Resources

Ecology

- Off-road vehicle use damages natural resources.
- Consider ecological impacts from all types of recreation transportation.
- Desert areas are sensitive to human disturbance. The recreating public is loving the Black Rock and Mojave Desert areas to death.
- Fit natural communities into urban open space. Avoid making artificial parks without natural benefits.

Socioeconomics

- Anticipate and plan for changes in outdoor recreation demand over the next ten years.
- Preserve cultural and historic resources.
- Maintain trails on public and private lands. Some local governments are developing trails plans to address trial maintenance.
- Economic benefits of recreation compared to those of agriculture and mining in rural communities may or may not be greater. Trade-offs between outdoor recreation economy and agriculture/mining economy need to be understood.
- Incentives are lacking that would encourage ranchers and other landowners to allow use of public land access roads that cross over private land.
- Fences and locked gates across grazing allotments block hunting and other recreational access to public lands. Recreational groups are finding more public land access roads blocked where the roads cross private land.
- Continue to make dispersed recreation opportunities available on public lands.
- Recreation fees should not prevent low-income families from visiting State Parks.

Institutional

- Build awareness on responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Take steps to reach irresponsible OHV users not a part of any responsible OHV organization.
- Restricted and limited OHV use areas are being identified in the Clark County Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan. Only restrict OHV use for necessary protective measures.
- Site designation and planning for concentrated recreation use should be a coordinated effort with counties and Nevada Division of State Parks.
- Development of wildlife management area plans by the Nevada Division of Wildlife (e.g., 3 C Ranch) should be a multi-party effort with local interests represented.
- Funds for OHV management may be raised through registration and fees. Do not put all funds into law enforcement.
- Raise fees necessary to fund protection of historic, prehistoric, petroglyphs and other archeological sites, especially in Southern Nevada.

Invasive Species

Ecology

- Invasion of noxious weeds and cheat grass is a landscape level issue that crosses political boundaries. Multi-jurisdictional actions are needed.
- Consider biological and mechanical weed control options in addition to herbicide control. Expect opposition when using herbicides.
- Grazing sheep on cheat grass in spring is a control option.
- Fire frequency is increasing with the spread of cheat grass.
- Revegetation is an essential part of weed control and prevention actions.
- Take action on native fish recovery and improve native fish habitat conditions.

Socioeconomics

- Cost of weed control may exceed land and resource value in some areas. However, higher valued lands can become infested if weeds are not controlled.
- Transportation contributes to the spread of invasive weeds. Blading/mowing in the right-of-way is ineffective.
- Work with weed districts to take care of priorities in the State Weed Plan.
- The state weed control law is punitive and threatening. Liens can be placed on property for cost of abatement.

Institutional

- Use the Natural Resources Conservation Service “ecological site index” to develop “threat maps.”
- Agencies and organizations have been working to eliminate invasive Eurasian watermilfoil at Lake Tahoe for years without success. Define successful control or eradication. Eradication goals may not be reasonable.
- The State Department of Agriculture is developing a coordinated State Weed Plan.
- Agencies responsible for control of invasive plants and animals should be not wait for Endangered Species Act listing to trigger actions.
- Noxious weed education should be a coordinated effort with all agencies and governments.
- Weed prevention and control funding is inadequate. A long-term government commitment of support is needed.
- State cost-share funding is needed to leverage federal dollars.
- Bring private money into weed control.

Air Resources

Ecology

- Air pollution is an important urban issue.
- Transportation sources contribute to particulate pollution problems in Southern Nevada and Western Nevada. Increasing vehicle miles traveled adds to pollution levels.
- The mining industry is releasing large quantities of mercury into the air.
- Energy conservation is important to reduce pollution from power plants in Southern Nevada. Energy consumption in Las Vegas is very high.
- Geothermal energy is a cleaner alternative to more polluting fuels at power plants, like coal.
- More polluting sources of power will be used if hydroelectric dams in the Northwest are gone.

Socioeconomic

- Projects/facilities for alternative modes of transportation are lacking. The Nevada Department of Transportation is only building highways.
- The city of Las Vegas is looking for urban design options, like compact development, to limit congestion and control increasing vehicle miles traveled.
- Scientific evidence about global warming and climate change is convincing. Look into studies of climate change effects on water resources, power production and pollutant emission and wildlife.

Institutional

- The state testified against air quality regulations intended to reduce regional haze in the Grand Canyon area. State government should take a more proactive stance on the issue. Standards for visibility should be considered.
- Better implementation of multi-modal transportation plans is needed. County transportation planners need to look at where people will work and live.
- The state needs to do a renewable energy resource assessment and relate it to air quality benefits.
- The state natural resources plan should address climate change study results that project effects on water use; pollution from increased power production; and impacts on biological resources and ecosystems.

Energy Resources

Ecology

- Recognize environmental benefits of renewable energy use in contrast to fossil fuels, like air quality and other quality of life factors.
- Energy conservation is important to reduce pollution from power plants in Southern Nevada. Energy consumption in Las Vegas is very high.
- Nevada uses a lot of hydroelectric power from the Northwest. If the dams are taken out of commission, more polluting sources will be used.
- Waste products are natural resources that can be used for energy production. Resource depletion can be avoided if more waste is recycled.

Socioeconomics

- Renewable energy technologies are being used in new construction without added cost. Nevada is ideal for passive solar houses and solar thermal homes.
- Access to geothermal energy could be blocked with the proposed Black Rock Desert Natural Conservation Area.
- Geothermal energy in the proposed Black Rock Natural Conservation Area is not needed now.
- Incentives to build solar homes are needed. California taxes energy bills to raise money for renewable energy incentive fund. Attract solar equipment businesses with incentives, such as not taxing solar and wind energy products.
- Use of renewable energy resources is a possible economic opportunity for rural communities and can improve Nevada's overall economy.
- Commercial use of pinyon and juniper trees is desirable. Biomass power production is an option.

Institutional

- Strong recommendations to use renewable energy resources are needed from the state plan.
- State agencies should conduct a state renewable energy resources assessment, including wind, solar, and geothermal energy.
- Renewable energy education is needed to teach building industry and planners about alternative designs for passive solar and other renewable energy uses.
- Growing communities need more utility transmission access. Approval of utility corridor projects on public land is difficult to obtain with environmental and archeological resource concerns.

Mining/Mineral Resources

Ecology

- Mine dewatering is having an impact on the Humboldt River. Open pit mines and dewatering discharges can cause water quality and water supply problems.
- The mining industry is releasing large quantities of mercury into the air.
- Abandoned mine closure activity has been prevented to maintain bat habitat. Priority should be on safety for humans over animal species.

Socioeconomics

- Give mining companies environmental requirements up front so they can plan for the costs. Regulatory costs drive mining companies overseas.
- Quality of life in rural communities is connected to mining. Urban people against mining misunderstand its economic and social importance to rural people.
- Reclamation is important. Determine the uses for which mined lands should be reclaimed. Abandoned mines have not been reclaimed because regulations were not in place then.
- More money has been given to urban counties than rural counties to close abandoned mines.
- Promote the use of public mineral resources to realize a sustainable and continuous supply of minerals. Sustainable levels assume minimal lands are given single or restrictive designations for active and intensive mine exploration, development and management. Maximum areas of mining should occur outside wilderness areas.

Military and Department of Energy Land Use

Socioeconomics

- Nellis Air Force Base is too close to large urban areas and should not be used for military purposes. Instead, use it for a second major airport.
- Watershed/water supply sources may be better protected on some military land. Often land disturbing uses are more limited than on Bureau of Land Management land.
- Yucca Mountain nuclear waste storage project site is too close to a large urban area. The US Air Force has concerns over the potential for an airplane crash into the project area.
- Some people are convinced the Yucca Mountain project is a done deal. Obtain economic benefits while the state can.
- Military exercises periodically impact the quality of life in rural areas. However, the military must have places to train for the good of the country.

Institutional

- Decide how military land management fits into the state natural resources plan.
- Consider putting the manager of Federal Facilities on the Steering Committee of the State Planning Team.
- Little or no local government input was sought during preparation of the Keystone Report for the Nevada Test Site. Keystone Report recommendations can affect land use outside military land. Recommendations for no more mineral exploration or no grazing on military land could be extended to adjacent public land.
- State and county agencies should plan for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste storage project, to avoid being in a bad position to have needs met if the project is approved. Contingency plans are needed. Prepare a transportation plan for hauling waste to Yucca Mountain.

Part 2. Natural Resource Planning, Data and Education

State Natural Resources Planning in Nevada

- Restore ecosystems. Improve ecological conditions. Focus on revitalization, restoration, and rehabilitation - enhance resources.
- Take leadership for complex issues/problems that do not get resolved.
- Develop a continuous planning process for people to stay engaged in the resource management process.
- Acknowledge the need for and work toward balance between economics and ecology.
- Develop solutions that are incentive driven. Avoid unfunded mandates.
- Recognize and protect private rights.
- Provide a summary of current resources plans. Link plans together. Facilitate communication between plans and agencies/organizations sponsoring those plans.
- Restructure state NRP Steering Committee to include local government, citizen groups, and federal agency representatives.
- Coordinate with Land Use Summit group, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Councils, Washoe Zephyr Group, State Commissions and Boards.
- Through the state NRP, convey to federal agencies the state priorities and policies on major issues. Give direction to federal plans. Work at the district level.
- Inform the public how state agencies work on natural resources so the public knows how to work with state agencies.
- Coordinate planning with adjacent states where landscapes and issues overlap.
- State agencies need more natural resources staff working in the field.
- Develop a state environmental policy/protection act if state natural resources planning assessment shows a need.
- Create a Nevada Division of Deserts.
- Inform public about state grant programs for funding natural resource improvement projects. Cost share funding is needed for actual resource enhancements.
- State agencies should ask legislature for more funding to implement critical programs.

Local Government Natural Resource Planning

- Refer to local plans for preferred land uses.
- Improve/expand state agency resource management and environmental protection services in rural communities.
- Take into consideration local/regional activities to improve and protect resources.
- Natural resource planning/management decisions directly affect society and economy in rural communities. Take into consideration community stability, local custom and culture and public land access in rural communities.
- Set measurable objectives for resource needs of communities.
- Visit counties and learn about assistance needs for resource planning and management.
- Help resolve differences between adjacent county land, water or natural resource plans.
- Work with weed districts to take care of priorities in the State Weed Plan.
- Support watershed planning at the local level.
- Site designation and planning for concentrated outdoor recreation uses should be a coordinated effort between counties and Nevada Divisions of State Parks or Wildlife.

Public Land and Natural Resources Planning

- Most natural resources are found on federally managed public land. Federal agency cooperation in development of the state natural resources plan is essential. Federal attitudes are in tune with preparing a state plan.
- A continuous process of interagency dialogue and collaboration is important.
- Friction and lack of understanding between regulatory agencies (e.g., State Historic Preservation Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service) and land management agencies raises obstacles to programs or projects that federal land management agencies are trying to implement.
- A state natural resources plan enables the federal government to be consistent with state laws and policies. The state should make recommendations to federal agencies about resolving natural resource issues.
- Federal resources plans should conform to county plans.
- Public land surrounds many communities and could constrain economic development. The amount of private land in some counties needs to be increased.
- The Bureau of Land Management is aware of public land ownership problems. State agencies should facilitate Bureau of Land Management land disposal plans.
- Rural government should have more say than urban government regarding endangered species in rural areas.
- Washington DC mandated rules and initiatives take local control of resource use on federally managed public land away from local government. Let district officials of federal agencies work with local government and organizations on land/resource use decisions. Use Memorandums of Understanding between federal agencies and local government to validate joint resource management actions and outcomes.
- A state steering committee is needed to coordinate the BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA) decision process. Wilderness designation locks public land into single use. National leadership of environmental organizations needs to work cooperatively through local offices on WSA recommendations.
- There are an increasing number of public roads and public land access points blocked by private land owners, resulting in less access to forage resources, mining, hunting, off road vehicle use and vast open areas.
- Public access to public lands and roads needs to be maintained by federal agencies.
- Public land use is moving more toward limited use. Multiple use is preferred.
- People have a difficult time getting involved in federal agency planning when multiple initiatives are going on at once for the same land.
- More information on the economic impacts of private to public land exchanges/sales is needed. County tax base falls when environmentally sensitive private land is bought and put into public ownership. A bigger tax burden is placed on remaining private landowners.
- The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program is not working correctly. All PILT money from the federal government should go to the rural counties with the most public land. The federal government could give land in lieu of taxes. The PILT program has never been fully funded.

Natural Resources Data

- A current inventory of natural resources is needed. Develop a comprehensive database on key resources. Identify gaps in natural resources information.
- Show better natural resource conditions as a state plan outcome.
- Natural resources data needs to be more accessible, available for everyone.
- Documentation of rangeland conditions is inadequate.
- Nevada Bird Conservation Plan by Lahontan Audubon Society is an information source for habitat conservation.
- The Nature Conservancy is preparing Ecoregional plans with biological data.
- More information on endemic species and habitats is needed.
- Revegetation trials are needed to find best seeding treatments for arid land reclamation or restoration.
- Research is needed on the use of fire as a resource management tool in forests and woodlands.
- Determine the suitable or appropriate numbers of wild horses, livestock and wildlife considering carrying capacity and ecological conditions. Manage public rangeland for economic and realistic livestock grazing levels. Determine livestock adjustments using data on long term monitoring and ecological conditions.
- Adaptive management and monitoring are critical parts of the plan. The state plan should have both short and long term goals with monitoring to measure progress/success. Monitoring of mitigation actions is not adequate.
- State agencies may be making management decisions without adequate information about the quality and quantity of natural resources.
- Economic benefits of recreation compared to those of agriculture and mining in rural communities may or may not be greater. Trade-offs between outdoor recreation economy and agriculture/mining economy need to be understood.
- Current information on changes in the net total of federally managed public land is needed. The state should be tracking changes in land ownership and measuring the economic effect of land exchanges. Cost and benefits of acquiring environmentally sensitive land needs to be analyzed.
- Funding is needed for the natural resources inventory.
- The state should gather and store raw data.
- Apply natural resources data in integrated analysis for natural resources management. Use GIS mapping to present integrated data for resource planning. Use electronic technology, digital cameras for monitoring, GIS, satellite images, etc. Work with Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology.
- Summarize natural resources studies. Coordinate with University of Nevada, Reno and Las Vegas, and the Desert Research Institute. Experts are needed to address specific issues.
- Present information on the status of important resources with respect to use and environmental quality factors for counties and the state. Include data on tourism/recreation, solid waste generated per capita, acres of threatened/endangered species habitat, air quality, amount of land developed, groundwater supply and quality, amount of wastewater generated per capita, and park acres per capita.
- Develop a report card showing how well we are doing conserving natural resources.
- Develop natural resource indices for quality of life. Try to measure quality of life, such as well water quality, seeing stars at night. Use non-technical terms that people understand.
- State agencies should help counties conduct a natural resources inventory where an inventory is needed to evaluate and recommend master plan land use designations.

- There is a lot of misinformation about public land grazing. The state rangeland commission is working to provide information to the public.
- High management and staff turnover in federal agencies result in loss of data.

Natural Resources Education

- Inform the public about state agencies' work on natural resources so the public knows how to work with state agencies.
- Many in Nevada are not aware of the natural resource problems. Environmental awareness is not common to find on the streets.
- Insufficient amounts of environmental and natural resource education are given in schools. Some counties do provide funds for environmental education curriculum.
- Field classes for all levels of school children can be more meaningful than classroom education. Concentrate on urban schools for field classes, including high-risk students. Be sure to communicate with the Spanish speaking population in Nevada.
- More education is needed on benefits of wetlands.
- Educate people about productive forest uses.
- Build awareness on responsible off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. Take steps to reach irresponsible OHV users not a part of any responsible OHV organization.
- People moving into urban areas do not understand the limitation of natural resources in Nevada. Education about people and use of natural resources is missing, especially in urban areas.
- Renewable energy education is needed to teach building industry and planners about alternative designs for passive solar and other renewable energy uses.